

# Useful Tools to Improve Communication

Agricultural Workforce Development Council

Tonya Van Slyke - NEDPA

Libby Eiholzer – CCE NWNY Team



Cornell University  
Cooperative Extension, Northwest New York Dairy, Livestock & Field Crops Team

How well are we communicating?

Language

Culture

Status

Gender

Mood

Scheduling



Cornell University  
Cooperative Extension, Northwest New York Dairy, Livestock & Field Crops Team

## Agricultural Workforce Development Council

### Collaborators:

- Agri-Mark Inc.
- Cayuga Marketing
- Dairy Farmers of America, LLC.
- Upstate Niagara Cooperative Inc.
- Cornell University
- American Dairy Association North East
- North East Dairy Producers Association (NEDPA)
- NY Vegetable Growers Association
- Ag Affiliates
- Agri-Placement Services Inc.
- Bob Gray and Mike Oscar
- New York State Horticultural Society
- Farm Credit East
- NY Farm Bureau



Cornell University  
Cooperative Extension, Northwest New York Dairy, Livestock & Field Crops Team

## Founding Principles

- AWDC was formed to be proactive in developing “Best Management Practices” seeking to access those guidelines and industry standards which promote responsible care and welfare for its valuable agricultural employees.
- We recognize the success of this effort depends on the **collaboration of workers and employers**.
- Like all employers we want to attract and retain the best qualified workers for our family farm operations.
- Employees are critical to the success of our farm and their safety is one of our priorities.



Cornell University  
Cooperative Extension, Northwest New York Dairy, Livestock & Field Crops Team

## Employer Issues

1. Failure of our government to address legal status of farm employees
2. #3 Consumer concern is treatment of employees (DMI research, Study from the Hartman Group on Transparency)
3. Farmers recognition of employee challenges
  - Housing, safety, communication, culture, ICE
4. Activity and support of legal proceedings from advocacy groups
5. The need to maintain a viable, long-term and dependable workforce
6. The need for education on the value of employment packages



Cornell University  
Cooperative Extension, Northeast New York Dairy, Livestock & Field Crops Team

## Who are the Worker Advocates?

### Worker Advocacy Organizations:

- Migrant Justice
- Worker Justice Center of Central New York
- Worker Center of CNY

### Worker Advocacy Collaborations:

- Cornell Law School, Farm Worker Legal Assistance Program receiving referrals from advocacy groups
- Some Migrant Health Clinic regional concerns



Cornell University  
Cooperative Extension, Northeast New York Dairy, Livestock & Field Crops Team

## The Advocates' Issues

- Wage rate, "wage theft"
  - Overtime eligibility
  - Deduction from wage
- Number of hours/days worked
- Have a strong desire for farm workers to unionize
- Lack of socialization due to legal status
  - Access to drivers licenses- "Green Light NY: Driving Together"
- Human Trafficking, sexual harassment
- Safety Training, safe working conditions
- Inadequate Grievance Process
- Living Conditions
  - Does housing meet "standards"
  - Ongoing pest issues



Cornell University  
Cooperative Extension, Northeast New York Dairy, Livestock & Field Crops Team

## Taking a Look at AWDC's Approach to Workforce Development

### Mission:

The Agricultural Workforce Development Council (AWDC) is a cross functional group of agricultural organizations, dedicated to the proactive promotion of positive on-farm employment practices and resources, in effort to ensure access to productive, well-trained and competitively compensated employees as a critical component to the future of agriculture.



Cornell University  
Cooperative Extension, Northeast New York Dairy, Livestock & Field Crops Team

## Areas of Focus

1. Continue to ask for clarification and education from NYS Department of Labor on current and OLD wage and hour regulations. (Ex. 190)
2. Ongoing outreach strategy for internal and external use.
  - a) Farm owner commitment to farm team/farm workers
  - b) Workforce development with continuous improvement
  - c) Proactive approach to prepare for incorrect reports given to media by worker advocates
3. Access current needs and develop educational materials for both farm owners and farm employees



Cornell University  
Cooperative Extension, Northwest New York Dairy, Livestock & Field Crops Team

## Areas of Focus (cont.)

4. Model employment guidance package
5. Develop industry partners to collaborate on labor challenges and opportunities.
6. Identify funding needs and opportunities



Cornell University  
Cooperative Extension, Northwest New York Dairy, Livestock & Field Crops Team

## Next Steps

- Finalize Housing Guidelines
- Continue working relationship with Department of Labor
- Outreach Strategy
  - Will be ongoing externally
  - Set target date for internal distribution of materials: ongoing
- Develop Training Materials Needs
  - On-farm training
  - Videos
  - New employee training
- Determine organizational direction, structure and funding



Cornell University  
Cooperative Extension, Northwest New York Dairy, Livestock & Field Crops Team

## Hispanic Worker Survey

- Lots of discussion about current situation on farms
  - Very little actual data
- Hispanic Dairy Worker Survey, Maloney & Grusenmeyer, 2005
- Revamped original survey summer of 2016
  - 205 workers
  - 36 dairy producers
  - Demographics, pay, job satisfaction, etc.

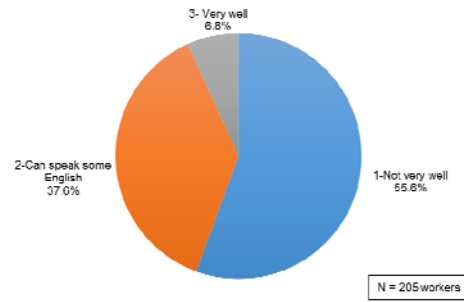


Cornell University  
Cooperative Extension, Northwest New York Dairy, Livestock & Field Crops Team

## Language

- We still have a ways to go!
  - Management level
  - Worker level

Figure 7: How Well Workers Speak English



Cornell University  
Cooperative Extension, Northwest New York Dairy, Livestock & Field Crops Team

## Hours Worked

Figure 14: Distribution of Hours Worked Per Week  
(employee-reported, N = 205 workers)

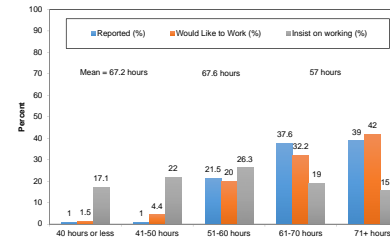


Table 4: Length of the Daily Work Shift (hours)  
N=205 workers

Length of Shift (Hours)	Number of Workers	Percent
6	1	0.5%
7	2	1.0%
8	1	0.5%
9	11	5.4%
10	27	13.1%
11	41	20.0%
12	114	55.6%
13	7	3.4%
15	1	0.5%



Cornell University  
Cooperative Extension, Northwest New York Dairy, Livestock & Field Crops Team

## Hours Worked

Table 5: Length of Time of Milking Shifts  
N=36 farms

Length of Shift (hours)	Number of Farms	Percent
3.5	1	2.8%
6	1	2.8%
7	1	2.8%
8	1	2.8%
9	2	5.6%
10	3	8.3%
11	5	13.9%
12	21	58.3%
13	1	2.8%

Table 6: Distribution of Number of Days Working Per Week  
N=205 workers

Number of Days	Number of Workers	Percent
4	1	0.5%
5	16	7.8%
6	182	88.8%
7	6	2.9%



Cornell University  
Cooperative Extension, Northwest New York Dairy, Livestock & Field Crops Team

## Wages and Benefits

Table 7: Quartiles of Hourly Wage Earned as Reported by Workers  
N=205 workers

	Hourly Wage
1 <sup>st</sup> Quartile	\$8.50-\$9.44
2 <sup>nd</sup> Quartile	\$9.50-\$9.74
3 <sup>rd</sup> Quartile	\$9.75-\$10.99
4 <sup>th</sup> Quartile	\$11.00-\$18.00
Mean	\$10.30
Standard Deviation	\$1.42



Cornell University  
Cooperative Extension, Northwest New York Dairy, Livestock & Field Crops Team

## Wages and Benefits

**Table 8: Quartiles of Hourly Wage Earned for Milkers as Reported by Employers**  
N=36 farms

	Starting Hourly Wage	Highest Hourly Wage
1st Quartile	\$9.00	\$9.00-\$9.99
2nd Quartile	\$9.01-\$9.24	\$10.00-\$10.49
3rd Quartile	\$9.25-\$9.49	\$10.50-\$11.74
4th Quartile	\$9.50-\$11.00	\$11.75-\$15.75
Mean	\$9.34	\$11.05
Standard Deviation	\$0.44	\$1.44

**Table 9: Quartiles of Highest Hourly Wage for Hispanic Workers as Reported by Employers**

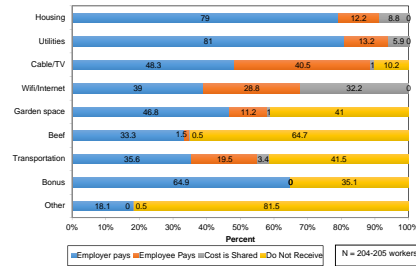
	Hourly Wage
1 <sup>st</sup> Quartile	\$9.50-\$10.75
2 <sup>nd</sup> Quartile	\$10.76-\$12.14
3 <sup>rd</sup> Quartile	\$12.15-\$13.00
4 <sup>th</sup> Quartile	\$13.01-\$26.00
Mean	\$12.94
Standard Deviation	\$3.26



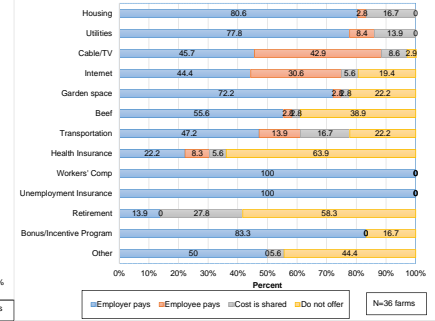
Cornell University  
Cooperative Extension, Northwest New York Dairy, Livestock & Field Crops Team

## Wages and Benefits

**Figure 17: Extra Benefits Provided to Worker (Worker Reported)**



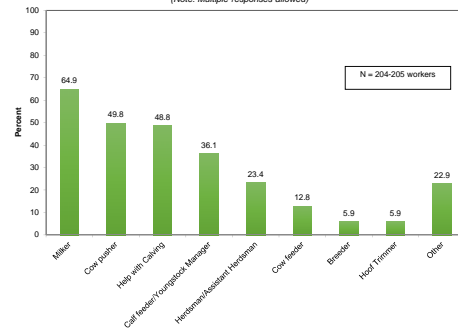
**Figure 18: Extra Benefits Provided to Worker (Employer Reported)**



Cornell University  
Cooperative Extension, Northwest New York Dairy, Livestock & Field Crops Team

## Tasks Performed

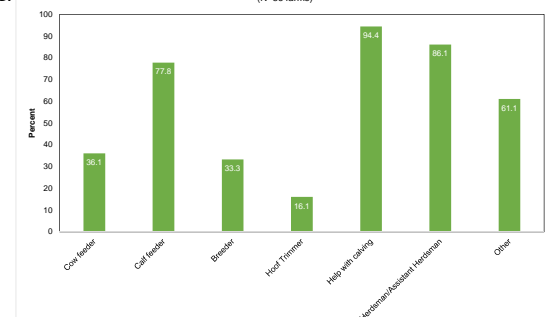
**Figure 15: Job Activities Performed as Reported by Workers**  
(Note: Multiple responses allowed)



Cornell University  
Cooperative Extension, Northwest New York Dairy, Livestock & Field Crops Team

## Tasks Performed

**Figure 16: Job Activities Performed as Reported by Employers**  
(N=36 farms)



Cornell University  
Cooperative Extension, Northwest New York Dairy, Livestock & Field Crops Team

## Plans for Future

Figure 19: Plans for the Future

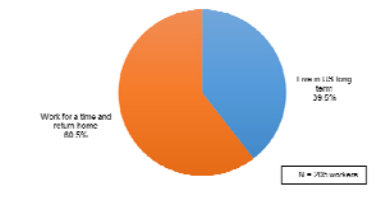
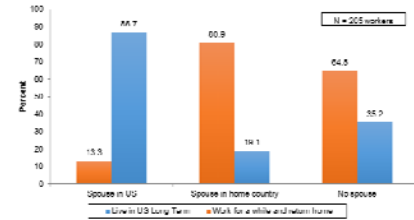


Figure 20: Plans for the Future by Marital Status



Cornell University  
Cooperative Extension, Northwest New York Dairy, Livestock & Field Crops Team

## Housing

- How you manage housing as a landlord
- What you need to do to comply



Cornell University  
Cooperative Extension, Northwest New York Dairy, Livestock & Field Crops Team

## Housing

- Clear policies, communication and follow through
  - Housing Quiz
  - Housing agreement
  - Housing rules
  - Regular housing inspections
  - Education to help resolve pest issues



Cornell University  
Cooperative Extension, Northwest New York Dairy, Livestock & Field Crops Team

## Housing Quiz



Cornell University  
Cooperative Extension, Northwest New York Dairy, Livestock & Field Crops Team

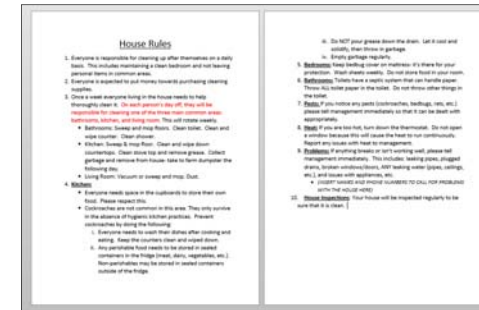
## Housing Agreement

- Signed by employees
- Lay the ground rules
- Is housing a term of employment?
- AWDC template reviewed by lawyers
- NYS DOL has examples to start with



Cornell University  
Cooperative Extension, Northwest New York Dairy, Livestock & Field Crops Team

## Housing Rules



Cornell University  
Cooperative Extension, Northwest New York Dairy, Livestock & Field Crops Team

## Housing- Cleaning Schedule

Tráiler en el Rancho							
Descansa	MANUEL	JAVIER	JUAN				
	Lunes	Martes	Miércoles	Jueves	Viernes	Sábado	Domingo
Semana 1	Baños	Cocina	Sala				
Semana 2	Cocina	Sala	Baños				
Semana 3	Sala	Baños	Cocina				



Cornell University  
Cooperative Extension, Northwest New York Dairy, Livestock & Field Crops Team

## Housing- Inspections

- Don't have to be a big deal!
- Employees are ASKING for owner support
- Start with high frequency (1x/week)
- Then less often (1x/month)
- Follow up with areas for improvement



Cornell University  
Cooperative Extension, Northwest New York Dairy, Livestock & Field Crops Team

## Job Satisfaction

- Most gave positive responses about their jobs
- What is the most difficult thing about your job?
  - 44%- nothing is difficult/everything is good
  - Calvings, milking, long hours, sick calves
- What do you like the most?
  - 37%- everything, 22%- milking
- What could boss do to make your job better?
  - 42%- nothing, 9%- higher pay, 8%- teach new skills
- What do you like about your boss?
  - 53%- Good person: friendly, treats us well, good heart



Cornell University  
Cooperative Extension, Northwest New York Dairy, Livestock & Field Crops Team

## Job Satisfaction

- We want employees to stay and feel good about their jobs.
- Positive comments due to farmers that are:
  - Making an effort to keep wages & benefits competitive
  - Provide attractive hours/scheduling
  - Listening to workers' needs



Cornell University  
Cooperative Extension, Northwest New York Dairy, Livestock & Field Crops Team

## Communication Conclusions

- Stay tuned in to your employees!
  - Open communication
  - Listening is just as important- culturally there are things that won't come out as easily
  - Remember- it's cultural to not want to upset the boss!
    - *authoritative culture*
    - If I don't tell the boss, he can't get upset with me!



Cornell University  
Cooperative Extension, Northwest New York Dairy, Livestock & Field Crops Team

## More Information:

- Hispanic Dairy Worker Survey Report:  
<http://publications.dyson.cornell.edu/outreach/extensionpdf/2016/Cornell-Dyson-eb1612.pdf>
- Worker Housing Materials:
  - <https://nwnyteam.cce.cornell.edu/> - click on "Bilingual" tab
- Tonya Van Slyke, [tonya@nedpa.org](mailto:tonya@nedpa.org)
- Libby Eiholzer, [geg2@cornell.edu](mailto:geg2@cornell.edu), 607-793-4847



Cornell University  
Cooperative Extension, Northwest New York Dairy, Livestock & Field Crops Team